

## Israelis bar Palestinians from roadsides

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — The Israeli army banned Palestinians from roadsides in the occupied West Bank at night from Saturday in an attempt to reduce armed attacks on Israeli vehicles, official military sources said. "From this evening the movement of residents will be forbidden on the sides of the roads in (the West Bank) for all the hours of darkness from 5 p.m. until 6 a.m.," the sources said. The ban would be in effect indefinitely in open areas and was imposed in response to night-time attacks on Israeli motorists by Palestinians, the sources said. More than 100,000 Jews live among the 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. A rapid expansion of settlement by the Israeli "Settlers" cars carry a different-coloured number plate than Palestinian vehicles and are frequent targets of stone and firework attacks by Palestinians. Israeli sources said some army officers were sceptical such a ban could be enforced. In the occupied Gaza Strip, residents reported fierce clashes between soldiers and Palestinians demonstrating to mark four years since the founding of the Islamic fundamentalist movement Hamas.

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## Algerian Islamists to contest poll

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's biggest opposition party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), said Saturday it would take part in the country's first multi-party general election due on Dec. 26. The FIS announced two weeks after the official start of campaigning that it would field candidates in all 430 constituencies for seats in the National Assembly. "To take a step towards the establishment of an Islamic state... the Majlis Ashoura has decided the FIS will take part in the forthcoming legislative elections," the party said in a statement after a meeting of its ruling body. The FIS had been threatening to boycott the election if its top two leaders were not freed from military detention. They have been held since last June after 35 people were killed in clashes between FIS supporters and security forces.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

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## Iraq says Iran not releasing prisoners

BAGHDAD (R) — A newspaper run by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday said Saturday a majority of Iraqis released recently by Iran were not prisoners of war (PoWs) but soldiers who took refuge there. Iran freed 450 Iraqis on Nov. 22 saying they were captured during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. "The Iraqis released by the Iranian authorities included military men who were forced to take refuge in Iran during acts of riots and aggression against Iraq and included very few prisoners of war," Babil said in an editorial. Tens of thousands of Shiite Muslims fled to Iran when the Iraqi army crushed their rebellion against the government shortly after the Gulf war in February. Iraq has been pressing Iran to release its PoWs estimated by Western diplomats in Tehran at 30,000. Iran says they may be freed in exchange for 5,000 Iranians still held by Iraq.

## Moroccan groups press for amnesty

CASABLANCA (R) — Leaders of 23 Moroccan political, trade union and humanitarian organisations met in Casablanca Saturday to demand the release of all political prisoners. A spokesman told Reuters they hoped to collect a million signatures for a petition to Prime Minister Azeddine Laraki calling for release of all political and trade union prisoners and amnesty for exiles. The group did not give a figure for Moroccan prisoners or exiles. Human rights groups estimate 800 people are in jail for their opinions. They include dozens of Marxists jailed for plotting to overthrow the monarchy, 14 Muslim fundamentalists sentenced to death in 1985 for plotting a violent revolution, and several hundred people jailed after bloody riots in 1981, 1984 and 1990.

## Sudan signs trade deal with Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Iran and Sudan signed a trade agreement Saturday during President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Nicosia, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported. Iran will export oil, agricultural machinery, medicine and electrical equipment to Sudan, which will ship meat, vegetable oil and maize in return, it said. It also calls for establishment of a shipping line between Iran and Sudan. Mr. Rafsanjani, returning from an Islamic summit in Senegal, arrived on Friday for the first by an Iranian head of state.

## 7 under probe for arms sales to Libya

ROME (AP) — A prosecutor has notified seven people, including two Libyans, that they are being investigated for alleged illegal arms sales to Libya, the Italian news agency ANSA said Saturday. Deputy Prosecutor Franco Jonta declined for now to identify any of the seven or to release specifics about the investigation. A special police investigation team has determined the illegal traffic included equipment used in the production of chemical weapons, the agency said. ANSA said the investigators believe the equipment was routed from Italy towards Libya through other unspecified countries. It said the magistrate has sought help in the investigation from the other countries.

## Kuwait to strip Khaled Al Hassan of citizenship

KUWAIT (R) — Khaled Al Hassan, one of the few Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders who did not support Iraq in the Gulf crisis, will be stripped of his Kuwaiti citizenship, palace sources said on Saturday. A decree will be issued on Sunday, they said. They did not say why. Mr. Hassan is a member of the central committee of the mainstream PLO faction Fatah. He was one of the few Palestinian officials who avoided rhetoric during the Gulf war and kept up relations with Saudi Arabia, where he took refuge during Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait, his former base.

## Negotiators fine-tune proposal to consolidate two-track peace talks

By Nermene Murad and Ghadeer Taher  
in Washington

THE JOINT Jordanian-Palestinian delegation met Saturday morning to prepare a counter-proposal to present to Israel's head of delegation as another round of "corridor diplomacy" is expected to resume Monday.

While Jordanian delegates say the latest Israeli proposal to resolve the issue of separation of the joint delegation into two distinct tracks was an "improvement" over their earlier proposals, they maintain that "basic

problems have not yet been solved."

The Israelis have recognised the two track — Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli — approach to the negotiations, but there still remained disagreement over how often a plenary meeting, which would bring the joint delegation and Israelis together, would meet and how many delegates from each of the three parties would attend. There was also disagreement over the legal authority each track should have to conclude agreements.

According to sources close to the Israeli delegations, they are planning to return home Tuesday to report back to their government.

### Sentiment swings against Israel

AMERICAN SENTIMENT is swinging against Israel, a poll conducted by the Wall Street Journal has revealed. According to the Journal's poll, 41 per cent of Americans now consider Israel the biggest obstacle to peace against 29 per cent who blame the Arabs.

According to a report that appeared in the Journal Saturday "pro-Israeli forces (in the U.S.) have all but given up on getting their desperately-sought \$10 billion loan guarantee in one shot."

"They now hope to win a one-year installment of \$2 billion," the Journal said.

According to the newspaper, almost two-to-one American voters do not think the Middle East talks will lead to peace; 55 per cent to 40 per cent, however, thought the U.S. should try to achieve peace in the region, the Journal reported.

meet but they say the decision was not final and they may extend until some progress is achieved. Jordanian delegates say they will insist that the Israeli teams remain in Washington until the issue of separation of the joint delegation is resolved and they move from the corridors and begin negotiations.

Reports from sources close to the Israeli delegation said "chances have increased" that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir would take a decision soon to authorise the delegations to return to Washington in January to continue negotiations with their Arab counterparts after breaking for Christmas holidays. These reports could not be confirmed immediately but the sources maintained that there is now a realisation in Israel that there is no need to change the venue of the talks and that they could resume next month in the U.S. capital.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, whose role in the peace process has been minimised by in-government rivalry, is expected in Washington Monday night. He is scheduled to meet U.S. President George Bush to "personally thank him for his efforts to repeat the General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism."

Dr. Jawad Al Asani, a senior member of the Jordanian delegation,

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## Scant U.S. media attention as Mideast talks remain in recess

Special from Washington

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS in the Soviet Union and American internal issues continued to dominate newscasts and newspaper coverage in the U.S. media. Middle East peace negotiations, having recessed for the weekend, drew scant attention, represented by a news report and a feature in the Washington Post, and a short story detailed Jerusalem in the New York Times.

Friday's Wall Street Journal published the results of a poll conducted recently in which it was found that American public sentiment is swinging against Israel, further endangering its loan guarantees" (see separate story).

In his news report in the Washington Post, John Goshko wrote that "the gulf between them (Israelis and Arabs) is far too wide to permit any quick... agreements."

"If you ask me where we will be a year from now, I would predict that we will not have reached any agreement," he quoted a senior Israeli negotiator as saying. "But I also believe that

(Continued on page 5)

## Yeltsin optimistic of new commonwealth's economy

MOSCOW (Agencies) — The new commonwealth of independent states will turn the economy around after one more year of hardship, Russian President Boris Yeltsin predicted in an interview published Saturday.

President Mikhail Gorbachev has softened his opposition to Mr. Yeltsin's new commonwealth as more republics flock to join it, leaving the Soviet leader politically isolated and close to resignation.

The decision Friday by the leaders of five more republics to join the Slavic troika of Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine in the commonwealth appeared to seal the destruction of Mr. Gorbachev's cherished union (see page 8).

Mr. Shevardnadze issued his warning at a congress of his own Democratic Reform Movement as pressure was building on the president to step down.

Mr. Gorbachev had effectively been denied any role in the new confederation which eliminates central authority, but appears prepared to hang on to power for at least the next few days.

Mr. Shevardnadze said Mr. Gorbachev was "working a great deal and both he and I want to facilitate the process of transforming the commonwealth," TASS news agency said.

"I believe he can do many useful things for this process," he said.

## Surprisingly few Mideast marches in Washington

By Keith Harriston  
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Since Dec. 4, when the first delegations arrived here for the Mideast peace conference, only one group with an interest in that topic has applied for a permit to demonstrate in Washington.

The lack of demonstrations surprised the U.S. Park Service, the agency responsible for granting permits and providing security for demonstrations on federal properties.

"We expected more requests for permits because of all the demonstrations we have had in the past during important international events," said Earle Kitteman, a Park Service spokesman.

The only demonstration to date was Monday, near the Syrian embassy. The rally and march, sponsored by the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington and the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, attracted few spectators and only a handful of reporters.

Two other groups have staged news conferences at the State Department, the site of the negotiations.

Why have so many of the many groups concerned about the Middle East taken advantage of the talks to get publicity for their causes? It might be the nature of the negotiations themselves, Middle East specialists and various interest groups said. The bottom line is that after a week of talking between the various Arab delegations and the Israelis, not much has happened.

"The talks are taking place in the dark and very little is coming out in the media," said Mary-Jane Deeb, a Middle East specialist at American University.

"There are different points of view in terms of what can be achieved, but most people agree that talks should take place."

On Monday, demonstrators gathered slowly in the park near the Syrian embassy, carrying signs that said "Syrian Jews never have a nice day" and wearing buttons that said "say no to the PLO."

At noon, in front of more than 100 protesters, the parade of speakers from the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews and the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington started.

They decried the treatment of the 4,500 Jews who live in Syria and,

(Continued on page 5)



## King visits Special Forces, army and marine units

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, Saturday toured several formations and units of the Fourth Royal Mechanised Division, the Special Forces and the Royal Marine Forces.

King Hussein first visited a "Special Forces unit and expressed admiration of and pride in the high-level attained by the unit in particular, and the Armed Forces in general."

The King then visited several formations and units of the Fourth Royal Mechanised Division and one of the Royal Marine Forces units.

King Hussein met with soldiers at these units' training sites and expressed admiration of their performance.

## Israeli activists support displaced Arabs in Silwan

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli leftists toured the Arab East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan Saturday in a show of support for Palestinians trying to evict Jewish settlers who occupied their homes.

Yael Dayan, daughter of former Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, led about 20 left-wing activists. They were accompanied by Palestinian leader Faisal Al Hussein.

A cameraman from Visnews, an international television agency, said Mr. Hussein's assistant was slapped in the face by an Israeli policeman trying to keep protesters away.

Palestinians and leftist Israelis say the settlement of Silwan by Jews threatens Arab-Israeli peace talks under way in Washington.

Despite international protests, Israel's强硬 government continues to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

The settlers have occupied five houses in Silwan. They say a housing ministry development company owns the homes and leased them to settlers.

Two Arab families are challenging the settlers in an Israeli court, saying the homes have belonged to them for generations.

## Balqaz named RJ chief; Jaber takes over CAA

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Ministers Saturday approved the resignation of Husein Abu Ghazaleh as executive president of Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national carrier, and appointed Mahmoud Jamal Balqaz to succeed him in the post.

The Cabinet also appointed Ahmad Jweibet Jaber as Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) director to succeed Mr. Balqaz.

According to an official state-

ment, the cabinet also approved the resignation of Khalid Abu Hassam as RJ board chairman but did not announce his successor.

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh is expected to be appointed ambassador at the Foreign Ministry, according to informed government sources.

The Cabinet also appointed Ahmad Jweibet Jaber as Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) director to succeed Mr. Balqaz.

Before succeeding Balqaz in his post, Mr. Jaber served as director general of the Queen Alia International Airport.

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## General Assembly expected to revoke Zionism resolution

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The General Assembly is expected to vote Monday to rescind a resolution it passed in 1975 that equates Zionism with racism.

The United States, which has led the campaign, says repeal is assured. U.S. diplomats say they have more than 100 votes to revoke in the 160-member assembly, and more than 70 cosponsors for the resolution.

Israeli Ambassador Yoram Aridor compared the denunciation of Zionism, the philosophy that Jews have a right to Israel, to the practice of tagging Jews with yellow stars of David in the Middle Ages, and again by the Nazis.

"I can say this resolution of 1975 was a stain on Zionism, and it is also a stain on the U.N. itself," he said. "Now I hope that this stain will be removed."

President George Bush said in a speech to the General Assembly in November: "To equate Zionism with racism is to reject Israelism, a member of good standing of the United Nations. This body cannot claim to seek peace and at the same time challenge Israel's right to exist."

Israel was enraged when the resolution was passed in 1975 at the urging of Arab countries. After the vote, Israeli Ambassador Chaim Herzog tore up a copy of the resolution and flung the pieces among the General Assembly delegates.

Israel once had been one of the most cherished members of the United Nations, which served as midwife at its birth. The General Assembly voted on Nov. 29, 1947, to divide the British mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, but the Arab state of Palestine was never established.

The United States and its allies dominated the General Assembly until the 1960s, protecting Israel from rebukes by other members.

In that decade, decolonisation created many new nations that

heeded the Soviet bloc's anti-colonialist rhetoric, and the General Assembly developed a bias against the West.

The vote in the General Assembly was 72-35, with 32 abstentions.

Today, the political make-up of the General Assembly has come full circle. Most developing nations abandoned socialism as a failed experiment even before the Soviet bloc collapsed and the Soviet Union itself began breaking up.

Nations in Africa and elsewhere that shunned Israel are restoring relations. Repeal of the anti-Zionism resolution will be a final step in the world's reconciliation with the Jewish state.

The United States was nearly ready to push for repeal in 1990, but the effort was sidelined by the Gulf crisis and the need to form a Western-Arab coalition against Iraq.

Keeping the coalition together was difficult enough without introducing a contentious issue that would upset the Arabs.

Revocation of the anti-Zionism resolution will not exempt Israel from criticism at the United Nations, and the protection of the United States is no longer there.

President Bush has not used the U.S. veto to spare Israel condemnation for expelling Palestinians, collective punishment, demolishing Arab homes in the occupied lands or the violence in Jerusalem in 1990, when security forces fired on Palestinians and at least 17 were killed.

Only once before has the General Assembly repealed a political resolution. In 1950, it revoked a recommendation approved in 1946 that Spain, the only axis nation still under fascist rule, be barred from U.N. agencies and that all member nations recall their ambassadors.

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created many new nations that

## 2,100-year-old unearthed at ancient Hellenistic city

NICOSIA (R) — A 2,100-year-old mosaic, measuring 10 square metres, has been unearthed at Kourion, and the Department of Antiquities said Saturday the piece was the largest and third oldest ever found on the island.

The mosaic is composed of black, red and white pebbles arranged in large floral motifs in concentric circles and symmetric chequer-board squares, the announcement said.

It added that "its discovery is a very important and unshakeable archaeological evidence of the existence and cultural development of the city of Kourion during the Hellenistic period dating to the second century B.C."

The mosaic was part of the floor decoration of the elaborate hot baths "equipped with a perfect system of under-the-floor heating," the announcement said.

The excavation also uncovered bronze coins of the period, clay oil lamps and figurines, glass vases and a large quantity of pot shards and other objects.

## Britons invited to claim Iraqi cash

LONDON (R) — Britain has told its citizens who were held by Iraq during the Gulf crisis that they can soon claim compensation from their captors.

Foreign Office official Michael Sullivan said on Saturday U.N. compensation forums would be sent to the former hostages "in the next few weeks."

Hundreds of Britons were trapped in the Gulf after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August last

year.

Some were taken to military and strategic sites in Iraq as "human shields" to ward off attacks and some hid under difficult conditions in occupied Kuwait City.

It is planned that compensation should be paid from Iraq's oil export receipts. Interim payments of up to £55,200 (\$99,500) could be available by the middle of next year.



PROTECTED BY THE GUN: An Israeli soldier guards a group of Israeli settlers who have seized an Arab home in occupied Arab Jerusalem

## Fighting resumes after lull in Somalia

NAIROBI (AP) — Fighting between rival clans for control of Somalia's capital resumed with artillery and mortar barrages Saturday after a one-day lull.

"There is heavy shelling again today," said Gregoire Tavernier, regional deputy director of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The sheltered renewed a week of almost continuous mortar, rocket and artillery exchanges in various parts of Mogadishu.

Aid workers estimate more than 3,000 people have been killed and nearly 8,000 wounded in the fighting that erupted Nov. 17.

Most of the wounded have been non-combatants, many of them children.

"It is a human disaster," Mr. Tavernier said. "Hospitals are over-flowed with the wounded. There is a shortage of doctors, medicine and now food."

The Red Cross halted food deliveries after a 39-year-old worker, Vim van Boxelraere, was shot while bringing food to a hospital Thursday.

Mr. Tavernier said Mr. Boxelraere's condition had improved and he was evacuated home to Belgium on Saturday.

The fighting is between forces loyal to President Ali Mahdi Mohammad of the ruling United Somali Congress and the party's chairman, General Mohammad Farrah Aidid.

Mr. Ali Mahdi was named president soon after the United Somali Congress chased former President Mohammad Siad Barre.

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The fighting between forces loyal to President

Jordan Times

## Rain fills some dams to the brim

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Department of Meteorology expects some rain Sunday, due to a shallow type of depression which formed over Sinai, with temperatures not exceeding nine degrees Celsius during the day time.

A department official told the Jordan Times that scattered showers were expected in the central and northern parts of Jordan Sunday but no more rain for Monday when it will remain cloudy with temperatures around normal.

The department earlier Saturday issued a bulletin in which it said that the northern regions of the country received as high as 82.5 millimetres of rain during the past three days but the amount was less towards the south as Ghor Safi and Aqaba received less than one millimetre of rain.

The rain of the past three days raised the water level in the King Talal Dam to 34 million cubic metres, up from 30 million after the earlier rain storm, according to Dr. Abdul Aziz Wishah, Secretary-General of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA).

He said that the latest readings of the water amounts in the dam, which has an 85-million-cubic-metre capacity, was taken Saturday.

Dr. Wishah told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Wadi Shueib and Kafraim dams, with combined total capacity of six million cubic metres were reported full to the brim but that the Sharhabil dam has only 570,000 cubic metres out of a capacity of 3.5 million and Wadi Al Arab dam has collected 3.5 million out of a total capacity of 17 million.



**KEY TO PEACE** — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan conferred in his office Saturday with a delegation of churches for Middle East peace in the United States. The group heard the Crown Prince outlining the situation in the region and the current social and economic difficulties encountered by the Kingdom as a consequence of the Gulf war. The Crown Prince also outlined the Jordan's policies with regard to various issues.

Discussions also covered the Palestinian people and the two sides voiced their support for the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination. In discussing the status of Jerusalem, the two sides laid stress on the need to present the holy city as a key to peace.

The American group plans to hold a seminar in Amman in the coming week to discuss the question "of Children of War."

## Friendship ties with Soviet people remain non-political

By Odeh Odeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

Talhouni said in a statement to the Jordan Times and Al Ra'i dailies.

The events on the political scene in the Soviet Union have nothing to do with the friendship society which deals with ties among people and not political entities," said Mr. Talhouni, a prominent member of the Upper House of Parliament and former Jordanian prime minister.

"As long as the people of the two countries exist an agreement on cooperation in cultural and social matters will remain valid," Mr. Talhouni added.

The society's secretary-general, Khaled Hamashwi, said that the Soviet Union has established 139 friendship societies with various countries of the world. These societies were pursuing their efforts towards cementing ties among peoples regardless of the political changes, Dr. Hamashwi noted.

Dr. Hamashwi believes that the society's role should be corroborated further to help contribute to the search for a lasting settlement to the Palestine problem.

TASS correspondent Genadi Marom said that TASS, which was founded in 1918, established its office in Amman in 1965.

"The staff continues to work as usual and nothing has happened yet to change the news agency's status," he said.

But Novosti news agency correspondent here Valdimir Bajat, said that his office shrunk with the termination of services of four Jordanians since last August.

He said he was continuing in his post, awaiting instructions about the future of the news agency's future plans to the region.

### HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Bedour awards Bowker JCO's shield

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) Director-General Jamal Bedour Saturday presented Australian Ambassador to Jordan, Robert Bowker, with JCO's shield as an expression of gratitude for the Australian government for its contribution to the Jordanian-Australian dry lands farming project. The 10-year project to which the Australian government has contributed a \$1,572,000 has been completed recently. The three-phase project aimed at increasing agricultural production in dry land through planting fodder and developing methods of planting grain and cereals.

#### Petra joins meetings in Morocco

RABAT (Petra) — The 19th conference of the general secretariat of the Federation Arab News Agencies (FANA) opened in Rabat Saturday. Representing the Jordan News Agency, Petra, at the three-day conference is its Director-General Ali Al Safadi.

#### CSCC opens branch in Sahab

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Service Consumers Corporation (CSCC) opened Saturday a new branch in Sahab city, south of Amman. The branch started offering services to beneficiaries the same day. With this branch, the corporation has now 27 branches all over the Kingdom.

#### Omra for Palestinians delayed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has delayed the date set for performing Al Omra pilgrimage to Mecca by Palestinians from Arab lands occupied in 1948 till further notice, the ministry sources said. The sources said the number of registered pilgrims from the occupied lands is 1,118. Those pilgrims, the sources said, are still awaiting for the Saudi authorities to grant them pilgrimage visas.

#### Jordanian, Libyan engineers meet

AMMAN (Petra) — The boards of the Jordanian and the Libyan engineers associations met here in Amman Saturday. Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) President Ismail Breiwish said that the two associations agreed to hold jointly specialised courses and seminars for engineers with the objective of exchanging expertise between the two countries. He said the JEA will send specialised teams to Libya to hold such courses and seminars.

### WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

#### EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Jumana Al Hussein at Abdal Hamid Shoman Foundation Gallery 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jalihi Oreiqat at the Phoenix Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Nadeem Muhsen and Halim Mabdi at Baldwin Art Gallery, the Gardens Street.

#### LECTURE

- ★ Lecture in Arabic, entitled "Integration between Islam and pan-Arabism" by the Islamic Judge of Shias, Hassan Al Amri, at Abdal Hamid Shoman Foundation — 6 p.m.

#### FILM

- ★ Feature film entitled "Norma Rae" at the American Centre — 7 p.m.

## ALECSO aims to implement pan-Arab biotechnology strategy

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 15 Arab countries including Jordan Saturday opened a three-day conference on promoting biotechnology in the Arab World in order to help its development and solve many of the nation's problems.

The conference, organised by the Arab League Education Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) is to review working papers dealing with inter-Arab cooperation in the field of biotechnology, food security in the Arab World and matters related to cooperation with the regional office of the United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) in building a pan-Arab biotechnology strategy.

Addressing the opening session, Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thousan Al Hindawi said that the Arab World needs biotechnology to deal with industrialisation, agriculture, energy and drug-manufacturing processes.

"The Arab World is facing a dangerous population explosion accompanied by growing needs

for food, water, energy, social services and other necessities which biotechnology techniques can help meet," the minister said.

The Arab countries have so far lacked coordination in investment in the exploitation of natural resources and in dealing with such issues like desertification and the depletion of energy and water resources, noted Mr. Hindawi.

He said that by adopting a pan-Arab strategy in biotechnology and its application, the Arab World could accomplish a great deal in all these fields.

"The Arab World's interest in benefiting from modern biotechnology should attract educationists and schools which can incorporate biotechnology in medium land in higher institutions' curricula," said the minister.

"Biotechnology is indeed beneficial in various realms of socio-economic development of the Arab World," he continued.

Referring to Jordan's own endeavours, the minister said that they have been progressing

through the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST). Both of these institutions have been contributing most effectively to the development of the educational process in Jordan in a bid to help Jordanians cope with the social, cultural and scientific developments in the world.

HCST Secretary-General Abdullah Touqan told the meeting that the council has been involved in studying the prospect of applying biotechnology in various development areas. "The HCST is also spearheading efforts in scientific research related to biotechnology in cooperation with Jordanian universities," Dr. Touqan said.

Countries represented at the meeting include: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Mauritania as well as ALECSO scientists and representatives of UNESCO office in Cairo and the United Nations Environment Programme (NEP) and the ALECSO office in Jordan.

ALECSO has organised the meeting in cooperation with the HCST in Amman.

water and energy-related fields. "ALECSO is currently aiming to put into force a pan-Arab biotechnology strategy so as to ensure its benefits for all Arab countries," Dr. Hamzeh added.

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ALECSO has organised the meeting in cooperation with the HCST in Amman.

## How can women speed development?

AMMAN (J.T.) — The role of women in developmental planning in the national economy and general productivity and the subject of training for women in the Arab World will be the main topics to be discussed in a three-day symposium opening in Amman Monday under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma.

The symposium, entitled "Women in Employment and Development of the Arab World" is expected to review 11 working papers dealing with women-related affairs, according to the pan-Arab Association for

Women in Development which is organising the conference in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Arab countries plus experts from ILO will be taking part in the meetings which are to be held at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman.

The symposium aims at identifying the extent of Arab women's contribution to planning of development projects, and women's role in shaping up the future of the Arab World, according to the organisers.

They said that agreements and conventions concluded between

ILO and various other parties, including Arab countries, and the difficulties encountered in the process of their applications will be examined.

Legislations in Arab countries about the role of workers and women's involvement in socio-economic development will also come under scrutiny.

The pan-Arab association, created upon the initiative of Princess Basma, groups men and women from Arab countries concerned with women issues and aims at promoting the status of women in the Arab society and enabling women to assume leadership roles in development.

Special attention is given to women in the Badia and rural regions of the Arab World and the association concerns itself with special studies and research work on women's affairs.

Among the association's various activities are seminars, conferences, informational functions and other programmes designed to orient the public on the role of Arab women.

The participants include delegations from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine, the ILO and the Arab League.

## Development and Employment Fund finances new projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Labour's Development and Employment Fund (DEF) has just approved JD 250,000 in loans to finance five income-generating projects to be carried out by associations and groups in urban and rural regions of Jordan.

The announcement was made Saturday by Abdul Ilah Abu Ayash, the fund's director, who said that the total cost of the five projects was JD 308,000 and the fund's contribution meant covering 81 per cent of the total cost. The projects were expected to create 210 new jobs.

The fund, created by the Ministry of Labour this year, aims at

providing soft loans to various groups and individuals wishing to start a business and seek to help those who acquired vocational training to open their own workshops.

Dr. Abu Ayash said that one of the projects, at a cost of JD 88,000, would be carried out by the Jordanian chapter of the Save the Children's Fund, and that the project aimed at producing children's food, bags, soap, and toys.

The project will create 35 new jobs for women.

The second project, to be carried out by the Society for the Care of the Soldiers Families, entails producing vegetables under plastic cover.

The project is expected to create jobs for five local families.

The fifth project is at Malih in the Madaba District and entails sheep fattening. The project will benefit 20 local families.

Dr. Abu Ayash said since March of 1991 and until now the DEF has provided JD 850,000 in soft loans to 15 different projects run by societies and groups creating jobs for 600 people.

Dr. Abu Ayash said that the fund also provided loans to finance 84 individual agricultural projects with a total cost of JD 70,000.

He said that 115 families in Jordan have benefited from the individual loans.

## Iraq's chief engineer cites impressive accomplishments with Jordanian help

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary-general of the Arab Engineers Federation, Abdul Sattar Rawi, said Saturday most of the buildings, bridges roads, factories, oil refineries and telecommunications centres which were destroyed in Iraq by the allied forces during the Gulf war were repaired.

He expressed his hope that the rest will be repaired next year.

Mr. Rawi lauded efforts exerted by the Iraqi engineers in reconstruction efforts noting that such achievements "show that the Arab Nation is in 'good shape' and is able to stand in the face of its enemies' ill designs and to build a good future for its sons."

Mr. Rawi, who is also head of the Iraqi Engineers Association, said in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that reconstruction works were carried out by Iraqi expertise with assistance from Jordanian engineers.

As a result of the reconstruction efforts, life returned to normalcy in Iraq, Mr. Rawi said.

"Electricity, water and communication links are now operating normally," he added.

He said that about 75 bridges out of a total of 133 bridges

destroyed by the allied forces in the war were repaired.

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Mr. Abdul Sattar is currently in Amman to take part in a seminar on Arab engineering capabilities. The two-day seminar, which was opened at the Professional Association Complex Saturday, is organised by the Arab Engineers Federation in cooperation with the Jordanian Engineers Association.

Delegations representing several Arab countries are taking part in it.

Jordan Engineers Association President Ismail Breiwish delivered an address in which he stressed the importance of the

seminar at the present time "because of the important influence of engineers' role on the development process in the Arab World."

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## Negotiators fine-tune proposal

(Continued from page 1)

and Friday that the Israelis had acknowledged the two-track approach and agreement had been reached that the joint delegation would be recognized as composed of two parties — a Jordanian and a Palestinian one.

The Israeli continue to insist on frequent plenary meetings to emphasize the joint nature of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The Jordanians and Palestinians, however, want these meetings to be convened only at the request of the three negotiating teams (i.e., Jordanian, Palestinians and Israeli).

The Israeli reject the Jordanian-Palestinian formula because they say it would give the Arab side a "veto power over the holding of plenary meetings."

The second major point of contention preventing an agreement is that the question of the legal authority of the individual tracks in relation to the joint delegation. The Jordanians and Palestinians want the two separate tracks to have the power to conclude agreements. Israel, trying to dilute the authority behind the Palestinian track, says the joint delegation should only have the power to ratify agreements after the individual tracks conclude negotiations.

The meeting of the joint delegation Saturday was expected to formulate another counter proposal to present at a scheduled meeting Monday. A meeting of the heads of the Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli delegations on Sunday was cancelled Friday, according to Jordanian delegates.

The full joint Jordanian-Palestinian and Israeli delegations have not yet met and will not meet until the issues of the two tracks and the procedural framework are resolved because the issue for the three parties has emerged as the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Ironically, observers say, even before the delegations have entered the negotiating rooms at the U.S. State Department they are negotiating the central issue of the conflict — the identity of the Palestinian people.

The ambiguity in the American letters of assurances sent to each of the parties to the talks has forced the Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis from the onset to define the Palestinian identity.

This issue of separation is not one of procedural wrangling as some would like to characterize it," Dr. Anani told the Jordan Times.

"It is a question of principle and the way it is resolved will certainly prejudge the future of deliberations and agenda items," he added.

The Palestinians insist on negotiating separately with the Israeli delegation as a distinct and separate entity.

## Scant U.S. media attention

(Continued from page 1)

was first carried in the Washington Post this summer.

The story in the New York Times, placed in its International Section, and detained Jerusalem, said the Israeli mayor of the Holy City, Teddy Kollek, denounced the Israeli government Saturday for catering to "extremists" with its support of fervent Israeli nationalists who moved this week into the large Arab district of Silwan in Arab East Jerusalem.

Television networks continued to largely ignore news of the peace talks, but ABC's Prime Time and CNN's Larry King Live featured the Palestinian spokesperson, in their programmes over the weekend.

On Friday, Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, leader of the Jordanian delegation, gave interviews to three Israeli newspapers (Haaretz, English language newspaper The Jerusalem Post and Yedioth Aharonot). The interviews will appear in Sunday's papers. Israeli television was also scheduled to interview Dr. Majali Saturday morning, but this and other press interviews with the Israeli media, which had applied en masse to see him, have been postponed, "for technical reasons," according to Jordanian delegation sources.

Roger N. Crummer, 59, had been paid \$1.47 million by the Jordanian government to design the device, the newspaper said, adding that the satellite system was neither completed nor delivered.

"The Centreville resident pleaded guilty in October to illegally designing and manufacturing an eavesdropping device for export and lying to a government agency when an investigation into the Viper project began earlier this year," the Washington Post reported.

"Nowocom and Dilligas Trading Co. Inc., the two Northern Virginia corporations owned by Crummer, also were fined \$3,000 each."

The news of Crummer's arrest

sent out its messages by way of news conferences and fax machines instead of demonstrations. Early during the negotiations, the group faced the news media at the Grand Hotel, where the Palestinian delegation is staying.

This week, the group held its news conference outside the State Department "to applaud the (Palestinian) delegation's decision not to meet with the Israelis except as an independent delegation."

The exterior of the State Department was the scene of another news conference, this one called by the Coalition for Jewish Concerns. Rabbi Avraham Weiss, president of the group, and a small group prayed for peace in the Mideast, secure borders for Israel and normalized relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Few people were around to hear Weiss' message, which was delivered before 9 a.m.

At midweek, the U.S. Interfaith Committee for Peace in the Middle East, a group of 1,500 American Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders, held a news conference and an interfaith service to promote "the centrist positions" of the three groups as they related to the Middle East.

The entire world has focused its attention on the Middle East," said Gilbert Kahn, executive director of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews. "It is our responsibility to focus attention on the plight of Syrian Jews."

Otherwise the district sidewalks and usual news conference sites have been uncharacteristically news-quiet, much like the peace talks themselves.

Palestinian-Americans for Peace with Justice has opted to

## Who got what from the EC summit and at what price

By Simon Alterman  
Reuter

MAASTRICHT — All 12 European Community leaders put their names to the Maastricht agreement and all 12 declared themselves happy.

Here is what each of them achieved (and what they didn't):

**Helmut Kohl (Germany)** — Secured a decisive step forward on EC integration, binding Germany more tightly to the community through political and monetary union, tough economic criteria for joining the future single currency, which, like the future European central bank, will be modelled on Germany's inflation-fighting principles, greater powers for the European Par-

liament, strengthened cooperation on immigration, asylum and international crime-fighting through the new Europol force.

He didn't get as much as he wanted for the European Parliament and had to settle for judicial and police matters being handled by inter-governmental cooperation rather than through the community's mechanisms.

**Jean Major (Britain)** — Obtained his opt-out clause (or opt-in clause, as he calls it) for the final stage of monetary union.

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liament, strengthened cooperation on immigration, asylum and international crime-fighting through the new Europol force.

He didn't get as much as he wanted for the European Parliament and had to settle for judicial and police matters being handled by inter-governmental cooperation rather than through the community's mechanisms.

**Francois Mitterrand (France)** — Secured the monetary union deal France has long coveted, including a commitment to a 1999 deadline for a single currency, helped conceive the embryo of a future European defence independent of the U.S., another long-standing French goal.

He didn't get an interventionist article on EC industrial policy or extensive majority voting on foreign policy.

**Felipe Gonzales (Spain)** — Obtained the binding commitments he sought for greater transfers of EC funds to poorer countries.

**Giulio Andreotti (Italy)** — Won the first commitment to monetary union with a strict timetable he had been working for since the two Rome summits of a year ago.

The price he had to pay was accepting some tough performance targets for Italy's deficit-ridden economy if it is to join the future single currency, albeit with some flexibility.

**Wilfried Martens (Belgium)** — Gave the European defence debate a push towards a greater EC role and blocked any decision on the seat of the European Central Bank when it looked as though

the price might be to confirm Strasbourg as the home of the European Parliament at the expense of Brussels.

**Jacques Santer (Luxembourg)** — Saw the draft political union treaty his government painstakingly negotiated as EC president in the first half of 1991 emerge as the clear basis for the Maastricht deal.

**Poul Schlüter (Denmark)** — Obtained a protocol allowing Denmark to hold a referendum before the final stage of a single currency and another allowing it to continue to ban foreigners, particularly Germans, from buying holiday homes in Denmark.

**Charles Haughey (Ireland)** — Secured protection of Irish neut-

rality even as the EC adopts a defence role, will benefit from the extra funds for poorer countries and obtained a protocol allowing Ireland to retain its ban on abortion.

**Constantine Mitsotakis (Greece)** — Will be another beneficiary from the money for poorer countries, obtained a promise that Greece can negotiate entry to the Western European union, the future defence arm of the EC.

**Anibal Cavaco Silva (Portugal)** — Will also benefit from the extra cash most important of all, the Maastricht deal removed the threat that the treaty talks would drag on until the Portuguese EC presidency starting January 1.

## U.S. keeps a wary eye on EC union

By Laurence McQuillan  
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The United States is keeping a wary eye on the European Community's political and monetary union, fearful that it may diminish America's influence in Europe.

Bush administration officials say U.S. self-interest dictates a sceptical, protective behind-the-scenes attitude even though diplomacy dictated a much more cordial public reaction on Washington's part.

"We welcome the historic steps towards economic and political union," President George Bush said in a statement summarizing the official U.S. view of a political and monetary accord approved by an EC summit early on Wednesday.

"Europe's steps towards unity will strengthen our renewed Atlantic alliance," Mr. Bush said, adding that a strengthened EC "has a vital role to play in assuring a stable and prosperous Europe."

Mr. Bush went out of his way, however, to underscore a need for continued U.S. presence on the continent, saying: "NATO will remain the essential forum for consultation among its members and the venue for... security and defence commitments."

In private, U.S. officials say the move towards historic harmony among the 12 EC member states is feeding fears that Washington — which has wielded dominant influence in Europe since World War II — is doomed to the role of outsider.

"Our concerns are economic,"

said one Bush administration official. "Our reason for being a force in Europe has been based on the Soviet threat. Without that, the argument (for continued U.S. clout) is thin."

**"Our concerns are economic. Our reason for being a force in Europe has been based on the Soviet threat. Without that, the argument (for continued U.S. clout) is thin."**

### NEWS ANALYSIS

The accord reached at Maastricht, Netherlands, formally to be signed in several weeks, goes well beyond introducing a single currency, the European Currency Unit (ECU), by 1999 at the latest.

It also calls for establishing a common foreign and security policy with joint actions to protect the bloc's interests — thus making it ultimately inevitable.

Without the threat of an East-West confrontation looming, administration officials acknowledge that the days of a strong American presence in Europe could be limited.

While the United States can buy some time from the fact that a fully unified Europe faces many obstacles, U.S. foreign policy will have to adapt to the long-range approach that unification is ultimately inevitable.

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## U.S. economy seems to be grinding to a standstill

**WASHINGTON (R)** — The U.S. economy, dragged down by huge budget deficits and cautious consumer spending, appears to be grinding to a standstill. The agonising slowness of economic growth — or perhaps the absence of it — together with the possible re-emergence of the recession, has forced the Bush administration to go into high gear to come up with a growth programme.

Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady and White House economic adviser Michael Boskin told the Senate Finance Committee

this week that economic activity is continuing to slow.

"The data available thus far for the fourth quarter suggest that growth, if any will be slight," said Mr. Boskin, who added that a consensus by private forecasters of a 1.3 per cent fourth-quarter growth rate was too high.

Some analysts believe that the economy could show negative marks when the fourth quarter figures are tallied up, adding to even more pressure on the administration and the Congress as the 1992 election year begins.

More positively, inflation

seems to be under control. The Labour Department said its producer price index that measures wholesale prices went up only 0.2 per cent last month after a big upward bump of 0.7 per cent in October that had briefly raised inflation fears.

Consumer prices in November also posted a modest increase, rising a moderate 0.4 per cent, according to figures released Friday. So far this year, consumer prices have increased at an annual rate of 2.9 per cent, compared to an increase of 6.4 per cent during the same period last year.

This should give the U.S. central bank, the Federal Reserve (Fed) Board, plenty of room to make another cut in interest rates, lowering its key discount rate that it charges banks to borrow to four per cent.

The policymaking body of the Fed that calls such shots, the Federal Open Market Committee, meets next week and many analysts believe that a rate cut will be ordered.

This, however, is by no means a sure thing.

Earlier this week, Federal Reserve Vice Chairman David Mullins tried to dampen pessimism about the U.S. economy by saying things were "not all that bleak" and be signs of growth picking up by late spring.

His comments suggested to some that the Fed was not about to lower interest rates again quickly, after cutting the federal funds rate, the interest banks charge each other for loans, by a quarter of a percentage point last Friday to 4.5 per cent.

Many believe that the key to

the future is the well-being of consumers. In this regard, there was little to suggest Friday that a major change in their cautious approach to buying had occurred.

The Labour Department said that average U.S. weekly earnings rose a slight 0.2 per cent after inflation in November, after a 0.7 per cent fall in October.

Economists say the meagre improvement in consumers' buying power is a major deterrent to spending, which would help fuel a recovery.

The Congressional Budget Office said recently the U.S. economy will remain "anaemic at best" through next spring.

But longer-term prospects for the economy may brighten, with an influential business group predicting moderate growth in 1992.

At a New York News Briefing, the National Association of Purchasing Management dismissed fears the nation may slip back into a second downturn.

"Although optimistic that a recession will not return, purchasers are expecting the economy to continue to recover at a slow pace during 1992, fuelled by continued relatively strong growth in exports and moderate inflation," said Robert Brotz, chairman of the trade group's Business Survey Committee.

He predicted manufacturer revenues would rise by 4.2 per cent before inflation next year.

But testimony in Washington, where lawmakers and the Bush administration are scrambling to get the economy back on track, focused on the near future — and was far gloomier.

"We expect growth to be anaemic at best through the spring of 1992," Congressional

Budget Office Director Robert Reischauer told the House of Representatives Budget Committee.

Mr. Reischauer, called in to advise lawmakers on growth proposals that are expected to surface early next year, said the pace of recovery from recession was only half the rate of previous economic comebacks.

And that could mean yet more job losses.

"The unemployment rate could rise a bit," said Mr. Reischauer. He added it was also "likely to remain above 6.5 per cent through much, if not all, of '92."

The U.S. unemployment rate is currently 6.8 per cent, after companies nationwide — from giant IBM Corp to tiny corner stores — slashed hundreds of thousands of jobs to cut costs.

## Sudan relaxes foreign currency rules

**KHARTOUM (R)** — Sudan has relaxed the rules for the possession of foreign currency, black market dealing in which carries the death penalty.

State-run radio reported Friday that under new central bank rules people holding foreign currency accounts would be allowed to withdraw any amount in cash which could be spent in official duty free shops or taken out of the country.

Three people have been executed in Sudan for illegally dealing in and possessing foreign currency since 1989.

Cash-strapped Sudan, suffering from famine and civil war, introduced the tough banking regulations to try to reduce the money supply and control inflation.

The government has, however, relaxed some regulations, allowing holders of hard currency to take their money out of Sudan as travellers cheques and to transfer money abroad through the banks.

The Sudanese pound was drastically devalued to a uniform rate of 15 to the U.S. dollar in October when subsidies on essential commodities including fuel and sugar were scrapped.

The old 12.3 pounds to the dollar rate was reserved for hard currency earners.

## Central American leaders call for anti-poverty drive



Mahathir Mohamad

1992. Singapore has agreed to buy 150 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas for 15 years for power generation.

Petronas President Azizan Zainul Abidin said it was negotiating the sale of an additional 10 to 20 MMSCFD of gas to Singapore for use as "town gas."

**TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (R)** — Central American presidents ended a two-day summit in Honduras Friday with a call for international aid to help fight crushing poverty in a region torn by guerrilla wars.

As long as deep social inequalities divide the region all Central American peace efforts threatened to end in failure, the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama warned in a joint statement.

"To consolidate a firm and lasting peace it is indispensable to assure adequate living conditions for our people," the statement said.

According to a report drawn up by regional health ministries, malnutrition alone takes the lives of 120,000 Central American children, aged five or younger, every year.

To reverse the critical levels of malnutrition and mortality endured by most of the region's 28 million people, the presidents of the cash-strapped countries said an estimated \$10 billion would have to be spent on social and health programmes over the next few years.

They urged the international community to assist in the region's development, but said the Washington-based Inter-American Development Bank was especially well-placed to help.

The meeting was billed by government officials as the first of 11 regional summits since 1986 that focused more on social issues than efforts to end Central America's guerrilla wars.

The six presidents also committed themselves to integrate their countries economically and to move quickly, as a trading bloc, to negotiate free trade agreements with Mexico and Venezuela.

## Moroccan phosphate production, exports fall by 20%

**RABAT (R)** — Production and exports by the Moroccan phosphate industry, the mainstay of the economy, slumped by about 20 per cent during the first half of the year.

Figures published by the ministry of commerce and industry Friday showed production of all minerals fell from 11.2 million tonnes during the first half of last year to 8.9 million tonnes in the same period this year.

A sharp fall in foreign demand during the Gulf crisis was said mainly to blame for the poor performance.

Output of raw phosphate rock, which accounted for most of the decline, fell 21.3 per cent from 5.2 million tonnes, and the value of exports slumped by 19 per cent to the equivalent of \$142 million. Foreign sales of phosphate by-products declined. Exports of phosphoric acid fell 6.6 per cent to \$180 million and of phosphate-based fertilisers by 30 per cent to \$115 million.

## Bulgaria plans debt rescheduling

igra Trade Bank, which is a state-owned joint-stock company — but not a state organ.

Some Bulgarian politicians have suggested bankrupting the bank to solve the debt problem, causing creditors some concern.

But in what could be a confidence-building move, Bulgaria's parliament is expected to recognise the sovereign nature of the debt within three months, senior officials said.

They said Bulgaria would also buy back part of the debt.

At present the debt is mostly in the name of the Bulgarian Foreign

debt is owed to around 300 private banks and Austrian and German banks have expressed interest in conducting debt-equity swaps in Bulgaria.

Deutsche Bank, A.G., which chairs Bulgaria's advisory committee of creditor banks, warned earlier this month that it would resign its position if Sofia did not provide a government guarantee for its debt.

Bulgaria suspended repayments of principal on the debt in March last year and froze interest payments the following June.

Since then bank creditors have repeatedly rolled over payments for 90-day periods.

Bulgarian negotiators met creditors in Vienna earlier this week and agreed another 90-day rollover on debt payments until the end of March. They are likely to meet again at the end of January, but no meeting has been fixed yet.

Earlier this year Bulgaria rescheduled \$1.8 billion of official debt owed to members of the Paris Club of government creditors.

## OECD says more aid should go to fledgling democracies

of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in its annual report.

The DAC groups 18 of the 24 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations plus the European Community (EC).

In his report, Mr. Love noted concern that some countries were pushing through difficult economic reform programmes at the same time as trying to install democracy.

He noted the argument that autocratic governments were more apt to implement tough reforms, and maybe new democratic governments should backpedal on economic reforms.

But he said a stronger consensus existed to help the new regimens effect the economic reforms as quickly as possible.

"Donors might help by increasing the assistance levels for countries undertaking concurrent political and economic reform," Mr. Love wrote.

"Collapse of these (newly democratic) governments, and reversion to autocratic systems, is a distinct threat if economic issues are not dealt with effectively. Haiti is a recent case in point," Mr. Love said.

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## N. Korea offers sanctuary for Honecker

MOSCOW (AP) — Former East German leader Erich Honecker, fighting expulsion to Germany to face criminal charges, has been offered sanctuary in North Korea for medical treatment on "humanitarian" grounds, a North Korean embassy official said Saturday.

North Korea's official news agency quoted a government official in Pyongyang as saying Russian and Soviet authorities "affirmatively responded" to their request to provide sanctuary, but did not elaborate.

There was no immediate official announcement about Mr. Honecker's future.

The Russian Information Agency, citing unnamed sources, said late Friday the Russian government had agreed to allow Mr. Honecker to stay for a few days inside the Chilean embassy, where he has been holed up since Wednesday.

Nyong Jin Yun, a counselor at the embassy, said Mr. Honecker Thursday had requested to be allowed to go to Pyongyang for medical treatment.

However, he said, the North Korean offer ruled out political asylum and was made only for medical treatment from "a humanitarian point of view."

He said Mr. Honecker could go to North Korea in two or three days if allowed to leave.

PyonYang's official Korea Central News Agency, in a dispatch monitored in Tokyo, quoted an anonymous spokesman for the Public Health Ministry as saying: "Our willingness to give medical assistance to a patient of his advanced age as he wishes fully conforms to the viewpoint of humanitarianism and defence of human rights."

"Therefore," he said, "the Soviet and Russian government authorities affirmatively responded to our stand."

Germany is seeking Mr. Honecker's return to stand trial on manslaughter charges for the policy of shooting people who tried to flee Communist east Germany.

The 79-year-old Mr. Honecker sought refuge in the Chilean embassy less than three days before the Russian government's deadline, set last month, of midnight Friday for him to leave the country or be expelled.

Mr. Yun said North Korean officials had appealed to Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to let Mr. Honecker go to Pyongyang for medical reasons.

Mr. Honecker's supporters have said he is suffering from kidney cancer.

Mr. Honecker, who spent years in Gestapo jails during the Nazi era, has appealed to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin to overturn the expulsion order.

## Gorbachev isolated as republics flock to commonwealth

MOSCOW (AP) — President Mikhail Gorbachev is softening his opposition to Boris Yeltsin's new commonwealth as more republics flock to join it, leaving the Soviet leader politically isolated and close to resignation.

Mr. Yeltsin, in a newspaper interview published Saturday, predicted the new commonwealth would turn the collapsing economy around by the end of 1992 and promised there would be no starvation this year.

The decision Friday by the leaders of five more republics to join the Slavic troika of Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine in the commonwealth appeared to seal the destruction of Mr. Gorbachev's cherished union.

Mr. Gorbachev was warned repeatedly in recent weeks that the breakup of the country into independent states would be a catastrophe and could lead to violence. But he sounded a brighter note Friday, saying he was satisfied that the new structure was "taking on a broad, representative character" and being formed constitutionally, according to his spokesman, Andrei Grachev.

Amid the threat of chaos brought on by food and fuel shortages, Mr. Gorbachev has argued passionately for preservation of a single state with a central government in Moscow.

But Mr. Yeltsin, in an interview with the newspaper *Trud*, said the commonwealth concept was "the optimum variant."

He said, "at first things will worsen, then there will be stabilisation, and in a year's time, things will start to improve slowly."

The main thing, he said, "is to withstand the first most difficult period of several months. If we don't fall to the ground, things will become easier."

Mr. Yeltsin said that during the difficult winter months to come, the commonwealth must be open and frank about problems.

"To avoid food riots, we should go to people and talk to them, make use of mass media to explain the situation," he said. "Under no circumstances should we resort to army or internal troops."

Mr. Yeltsin promised there would be no starvation over the next year as economic reforms

are enacted. "During that time, the 'food basket' will be full by two-thirds. There will be no starvation," he said.

He also said the commonwealth will ensure that the armed forces and nuclear weapons will stay within a "single command system."

Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Gorbachev, in separate telephone calls Friday, both assured President George Bush that the command and control system for nuclear weapons remains secure.

According to TASS, Mr. Gorbachev told Mr. Bush that he now saw his main task as "making sure that processes go on without confrontation, within the constitutional framework, and involve elected bodies and people themselves."

Eight republics, representing more than 90 per cent of the Soviet population, now are moving to form the commonwealth.

Mr. Gorbachev said this week he would resign "as a matter of principle" if the republics chose the loose commonwealth arrangement over his proposed union treaty.

A source close to the 60-year-

old president said Friday he probably would not quit until at least seven of the 12 republic legislatures have ratified the commonwealth pact. It was unclear when that might be. But Mr. Gorbachev is expected to remain in office for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Moscow next week.

The Soviet Union is heading into winter with food and fuel perilously short, and U.S. officials have expressed concern about the possibility of widespread unrest.

Mr. Gorbachev lost his last major domestic political ally Friday when Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbayev, agreed to join the new structure and delivered a stinging retort to the Soviet president.

"As far as Gorbachev is concerned, it's time for him to stop making hysterical warnings about imminent bloodshed and great misfortune," Mr. Nazarbayev told reporters in Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenistan, 1,600 miles (2,600 kilometres) southeast of Moscow.

Mr. Nazarbayev and the leaders of the four Central Asian

republics Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirgizia — agreed in Ashkhabad to join the commonwealth if they are recognised as equal co-founders with the Slavic republics.

Mr. Baker said Friday the United States cannot and will not inject itself into Soviet affairs as power shifts from the centre to the Soviet republics.

Mr. Baker, on the eve of a trip to several Soviet republic capitals, said the "new Russian revolution... must come from within and not from outside."

Mr. Baker, at a news conference after meeting with President Bush, said the president spoke by telephone Friday with Mr. Yeltsin who gave him a "full update" on efforts to form a new commonwealth to replace the Soviet Union.

"Events are moving quickly and dramatic decisions are being made as the republics sort out relations among themselves" and seek to form a common entity for national policy, Mr. Baker said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Air Force cargo planes will deliver humanitarian relief supplies to cities in Russia, Byelorussia and Armenia

a week before Christmas, the U.S. Defence Department announced Friday.

A C-5 aircraft from Westover Air Force Base, Mass., will leave Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on Dec. 15 with 150,000 pounds (11,500 kilograms) of relief supplies. It is due to arrive in Moscow on Dec. 17 with cots, blankets, clothing and medical supplies.

Half of the cargo will be unloaded in Moscow and the other half will be sent on to Yerevan, Armenia.

On Dec. 18, a U.S. Air Force C-141 will leave from Rhein Main Air Base, Germany, with relief supplies for delivery to Minsk, the Byelorussian capital.

The U.S. Defence Department organised 23 previous relief flights to Armenia in response to the 1988 earthquake, but the C-5 flight announced Friday will be the first U.S. humanitarian mission to Moscow and Minsk.

The cots, blankets and clothing are from excess Defence Department stocks. The medical supplies are donated by private voluntary organisations.

## COLUMN 8

### Ancient culture discovered in Amazon basin

WASHINGTON (R) — The discovery of ancient pottery vessels in the Amazon basin is evidence that a sophisticated society lived there 7,000 to 8,000 years ago, archaeologist Anna Roosevelt said. The fragile, red-brown pottery shards are from a people who were technologically advanced long before the Incas and other cultures of the Andes, she said in an article in the Dec. 13 issue of *Science* magazine. Ms. Roosevelt, curator of archaeology at the Field Museum in Chicago, led the expedition to the Amazon region in 1987 as a challenge to earlier studies from the 19th and mid-20th centuries which guessed the pottery finds to be only 1,000 to 1,400 years old. Carbon-dating and thermoluminescence analysis, another dating technique, placed them at 7,000 to 8,000 years old, at least 1,000 to 1,400 years older than the oldest pottery previously found in South America. The finding and dating of the pottery refutes the long-held belief that the region had only been sparsely populated in prehistoric times, she said. The excavations were carried out at the village of Taperinha in the Santarem region of Brazil.

### Germany to recognise Yugoslav republics

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Germany has flatly rejected the U.N. secretary-general's pleas against recognising breakaway Yugoslav republics Croatia and Slovenia as independent states.

The Bonn government said that failing to do so, would only encourage the Yugoslav military to escalate its war against separatist territories.

If the troops stay, the politicians will never cut through the knot of problems which have piled up in the region.

His remarks conflicted with last month's decision by the State Council, the collective Soviet leadership, to deploy more troops as flashpoints in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Since the decision was taken,

Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia

have set up their own commonwealth of independent states, stripping Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev of power and reducing the council he heads to a virtually powerless body.

Armenia and Azerbaijan came

to the brink of war last month

after a plane carrying Azeri officials

and peace negotiators crashed in Nagorno-Karabakh, killing 20.

Azerbaijan accused Armenia

of shooting it down, while the Armenians blamed the incident on bad weather.

Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed

itself independent after a referendum this week and has applied to

join the new commonwealth.

Azerbaijan declared the move illegal. A statement from the office of President Mutalibov Friday said the republic was abolishing the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh, a decision likely to further aggravate tensions with Armenia.

"Our proposals are simple: A

### Ukraine scraps law banning male homosexual acts

KIEV (R) — Ukraine's parliament voted to repeal a Soviet law imposing sentences of between two and five years imprisonment for male homosexual acts.

The decision was taken during a debate on AIDS. Valery Ivashko, chairman of a National Committee on the Disease, said Ukraine was the first former Soviet republic where homosexuality would no longer be a crime.

The observers would survey logistics for a huge U.N. peacekeeping force to be sent only if the Serbs and Croats stop fighting.

Some diplomats said the measure was aimed partly at showing Germany that the United Nations was trying to resolve the conflict and thus head off recognition of Croatia.

Mr. Ivashko said in the letter that the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army would feel rewarded for its aggressive policies towards Croatia if the breakaway republics were not recognised, and an "escalation of violence" might follow.

Responding to a letter Mr. Perez de Cuellar sent to the European Community (EC) Tuesday, Mr. Ivashko wrote that he was deeply concerned its message would encourage the very forces who have "resisted a successful conclusion to the peace process."

Mr. Perez de Cuellar earlier in the week warned the EC that immediate recognition of Croatia could spread the conflict to other republics with Serbian minorities.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl has promised to recognise both republics as independent states by Christmas and the EC is expected to discuss the question in Brussels Monday.

A draft Security Council resolution alludes to the recognition controversy by "strongly" urging states and parties "to refrain from any action, political or other which might contribute to increasing tension."

Britain and the United States are opposed to recognition of the breakaway republics, fearing it may remove any incentive for the parties to compromise.

Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov told reporters, "personally, as the representative of the Soviet Union, I hope very much that they (Germany) would not make that move."

The draft, initiated by France, asks the Secretary-General to send a "small group of personnel, including military personnel," to Yugoslavia as part of the mission of his envoy, Cyrus Vance, to prepare for a possible peacekeeping operation.

About a dozen monitors are expected to go.

The secretary-general has recommended a peacekeeping force of more than 10,000 for Serbian enclaves within Croatia but only after the warring parties stop fighting.

So far 14 ceasefires between Croatia and Serbian forces have failed.

Major newspapers carried stories Saturday quoting unnamed government sources as saying ratification of the accord in the South Korean parliament will be endangered unless the North halts its nuclear weapons programme.

Mr. Yun said North Korean officials had appealed to Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to let Mr. Honecker go to Pyongyang for medical reasons.

Mr. Honecker's supporters have said he is suffering from kidney cancer.

In a separate development, the commander of Soviet Interior Ministry troops said Friday his men should pull out of a disputed southern territory where Armenians and Azeris have fought each other for nearly four years in an ethnic conflict.

Lieutenant-General Vasily Savin told Soviet News Agency (TASS) it was senseless for Interior Ministry troops to remain in the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, where some 1,000 people have been killed since fighting broke out in 1988.

"Our proposals are simple: A

## London store complex hit by firebombs

LONDON (R) — A London shopping centre was the target of a guerrilla arson attack Saturday, raising fears of a Christmas bombing blitz on busy British stores by the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Anti-terrorist squad officers were called to the Brent Cross Shopping Centre in North London early Saturday after fires broke out in two stores in the complex.

They found the blazes were caused by incendiary devices similar to those used in a spate of firebombings by the IRA in its fight against British rule in Northern Ireland.

The Brent Cross attack, marking the third consecutive weekend of firebombings on the British mainland, confirms police fears that the IRA is stepping up a campaign of chaos and disruption in the hectic shopping days before Christmas.

No one has been injured in the wave of arson attacks, which have centred on the capital and northern England, but merchandise and buildings have been badly damaged.

Last weekend, more than a dozen devices were planted in a firebombing spree in Northern England, one of them in a child's car seat on sale in a department store.

Police said the incendiary devices at Brent Cross were "similar to those found in London, Manchester and Blackpool in recent weeks."

This development, an unidentified spokesman for the Foreign Ministry was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

He said it reflected "the interests and aspirations of the Korean people" and would help preserve peace in Asia.

On Friday, South Korean Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik urged North Korea to accept simultaneous inspections of suspected nuclear weapons sites, including U.S. bases in the South.

He also called for a ban on nuclear reprocessing and plutonium enrichment facilities.

North Korea has denied developing nuclear arms and instead demanded the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons it says are deployed in the South. South Korea's proposal for mutual inspections, including U.S. bases, nullifies that demand.

Editorials and columns in South Korean newspapers Saturday warned that nuclear issues could still overshadow the accord, making it meaningless. Some blamed the government for putting aside nuclear issues to get an agreement which could be a political coup for the governing party in an election year.

"Without solving the nuclear issue, peace cannot be consolidated," said Lee Bu-Yong, vice president of the leading opposition Democratic Party Saturday.

"Political considerations appear to have affected the decision (to sign)."

The Dong-A Ilbo newspaper published a survey of 1,200 adults that they said showed 72 per cent felt the government should exercise caution in implementing either the accord or dealing with the North on nuclear issues.

## Azerbaijan is in no rush to join new commonwealth

BAKU, Soviet Union (R) — Azerbaijan said it was in no hurry to follow eight other Soviet republics into a new commonwealth, saying its top priority was independence.

President Ayaz Mutalibov's spokesman Rassim Musabekov said Azerbaijan welcomed the commonwealth initiative but added that it would "first evaluate what this all means for Azerbaijan."

Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan announced Friday they would be willing to join the commonwealth to bring the Soviet Union apart. Many fear a bloodbath if Soviet troops pull out.

But Gen. Savin said a withdrawal would give the people of the region the chance to resolve their differences.

If the troops stay, the politicians will never cut through the knot of problems which